

Rev. 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

Rev. 13:2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

It makes sense to see the Antichrist being shown as a beast at this point in John's narrative. It is at the mid-point of the tribulation that he reveals his true colors. Remember, he arose on the world stage as a man championing peace.

Immediately I made a connection with Rev. 12:3. This beast has 7 heads, 10 horns and 10 crowns on his horns. In Rev. 12:3 the dragon has 7 heads, 10 horns, and 7 crowns on his heads. In Daniel 7 the 4th beast has 10 horns, then Daniel sees another little horn emerge that uproots 3 of the 10 horns.

Chris White made an interesting observation: "If you take the beasts in Daniel 7, that is a lion with wings, a bear, a four-headed leopard, and a 10 horned beast, and you combined them all into one beast, you would have a 7 headed ten horned beast with characteristics of a bear, leopard and a lion, exactly what we see in Revelation 13."

Daniel 7:7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

Another interesting verse that makes connection here is found in Isaiah.

Isaiah 27:1 In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish *leviathan* the piercing serpent, even *leviathan* that crooked serpent; and he shall slay **the dragon that is in the sea**.

In Revelation 13:1 it is the beast that rises from the sea, and in the verse in Isaiah it is the dragon that is in the sea. I think they are so intertwined with one another, that it is hard to distinguish them. The beast, the Antichrist, is dependent upon the dragon, Satan (cf 12:9), for his power and authority. When Satan is thrown out of heaven in the middle of the tribulation, I believe he indwells the Antichrist. They are two independent beings and will meet their own judgment at different times, but they operate in the tribulation as an inseparable unit. He has completely sold his soul to the devil.

When I looked up the verses re "the sand of the sea," there appeared to be two main references—regarding the seed of Abraham and regarding an incalculable number. This verse seems to be placing John's position at the seashore, probably the Mediterranean from his point of reference. Could there also be a clue as to the origin of the beast? Based on Antiochus Epiphanes as a type of Antichrist, his origin would be from that area, the birthplace of Antiochus.

I've always read/heard that the sea represents the nations, and it just means that there will be a powerful being emerge from the body of nations. Scripture tells us that the heads represent kingdoms and the horns represent rulers/kings. (See my notes on Daniel 7.)

Arthur Pink has this to say about the sea in his book The Antichrist: "In scripture, the troubled 'sea' is frequently a figure of restless humanity away from God. The Antichrist will come upon the scene at a time of unprecedented social disturbance and governmental upheaval. He will appear at a crisis in the history of the world."

Scripture depicts the sea as a place that causes fear.

Psalms 89:8-9 O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.

Isaiah 57:20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

I liked this observation by David Guzik: "...Jewish people in biblical times regarded the sea as a wild, untamed, frightening place.... From the place identified with evil and chaos and resisting God, a beast comes forth."

This beast also wears "the name of blasphemy" on his heads. The word for blasphemy indicates evil speaking, defaming, and despising the name of God. This beast will be an enemy of all that is godly. By the way, that has been a true characterization of the 7 kingdoms represented by the heads.

Next the beast is described as a composite of three animals, which seem to correspond to three of the beasts seen by Daniel in his vision.

*Daniel 7:3-6 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a **lion**, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second, like to a **bear**, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo another, like a **leopard**, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.*

Mark Hitchcock makes a good observation—John is looking back in history while Daniel is looking forward, so John sees the beasts in reverse order to Daniel.

It seems to indicate to me that the Antichrist will possess the combined strengths of the rulers represented by the kingdoms Daniel saw. Then we are told that the beast is given his power (includes miraculous power), seat (his throne, his position), and great authority (includes ability, privilege, superhuman mastery, jurisdiction) by the dragon, already identified as Satan.

Yes, the Roman Empire fell long ago. That is true, but scripture declares that there will be a confederacy of ten kings or rulers (pictured by the ten toes of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the ten horns on the fourth beast in Daniel's dream) that will once again come to power from the remains of that fallen empire that will unite under the leadership of the Antichrist to control the world.

One can't help but wonder why the other great kings/kingdoms of the world (e.g., the Ottomans or Mongols) were not included in Daniel's and John's visions? Because God is using the scripture to tell His-story as reflected through His dealings with the nation of Israel. After 70 AD that nation no longer existed. Since it is once again an active nation on the world scene (as of 1948), we can look for the resurgence of the last world kingdom/empire from the territory of the Roman Empire. Its interaction with Israel will be used by God to fulfill scripture and bring about the fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham.

Rev. 13:3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

As John is watching, he sees one of the heads wounded to death. The word for *wounded* is "**sphazo**, *sfad'-zo*; a primary verb; to butcher (especially an animal for food or in sacrifice) or (generally) to slaughter, or (specially), to maim (violently):—kill, slay, wound."

John notes that the wound that appeared to be fatal to the beast, the individual, is healed to the amazement of all in the world (see verses 12&14 below). This would seem to be referencing the 11th horn that rises to power by subduing 3 of the 10 (see Daniel 7:8 above).

The expanded Greek translation by Kenneth Wuest adds clarification: "And one of his heads appeared to have been mortally wounded, the throat having been slashed. And his death stroke was healed."

Arnold Fruchtenbaum states that "as it were wounded unto death" is an idiom for a resurrected individual and that real death is involved. The same phrasing is used in reference to the Messiah in chapter 5, verse 6. I wish I could read the Greek myself to compare; I just don't see this. Only God has the power to give life.

Rev. 13:4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

It is probably this apparently miraculous resurrection that will convince the world as a whole to give the Antichrist the authority to lead a "new world order." "They" refers back to "all the world." John tells us that the world will worship the dragon (Satan) and the beast (Antichrist) since he appears to be invincible.

Isaiah 16:14 uses the phrase “Is this the man?” in reference to Lucifer. I think this a reference to the fact that Satan indwells the antichrist, the beast; and I believe it happens in connection with his resurrection.

2Thessalonians 2:3 refers to the man of sin as “the son of perdition.” This term is only used of one other person in scripture—Judas Iscariot. Both Luke (22:3) and John (13:27) tell us that Satan entered or possessed Judas. I believe Antichrist is the second man possessed personally by Satan.

The question becomes--Why do they worship the dragon? Is the beast publicly crediting his powers to Satan? It seems obvious to me that the Antichrist is trying to mirror Christ in every way possible. He credits his authority as “god” to Satan in the same way that Jesus accredited His authority to His Father in heaven. He works lying wonders to deceive in contrast to the true miracles Jesus worked to inspire faith. He stages an apparent resurrection from the dead in light of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Rev. 13:5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.
Rev. 13:6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

Him = the beast.

As Satan always does, he blasphemes God and everything connected to Him. He blasphemes the name of God. The name of God is indicative of things precious to God throughout the scripture—among them the nation of Israel and the city of Jerusalem. God is very jealous concerning His name.

Numbers 6:27 And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.

2Chronicles 6:6 But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there; and have chosen David to be over my people Israel.

Isaiah 48:11 For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.

Satan is aware of the scripture and all that is embodied through the name of God, and it is no small thing that he chooses to blaspheme the name of God.

The beast also blasphemes God’s tabernacle, His dwelling place. Although believers are indwelt by the Spirit in this age of grace, I am not sure that is a given in the 7 years of tribulation. People of faith in Old Testament times weren’t indwelt by the Spirit except at specific times. The seventieth week of Daniel is going back to a time that God is dealing primarily with the Jews, and it would seem that He would continue to work during that time as He did during the first 69 weeks.

It’s interesting that the beast also blasphemes “them that dwell in heaven (the sky; by extension, heaven--as the abode of God).” Satan is well aware of the reality of heaven

as God's dwelling place; he's had access all these years to accuse the brethren. Is he just thinking of the angels that remained true to God and refused to rebel with him? I think he is also thinking of the saints that are at home in heaven with the Savior as well. He has now been kicked out forever, and it's like he is cursing to vent his anger.

Daniel also spoke of the "great things" and blasphemies that would be spoken by this ruler.

***Daniel 7:8** I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.*

***Daniel 7:25** And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.*

***Daniel 11:36** And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.*

Although he is given his power by Satan, the time established in which this power will be allowed to operate with supreme authority has been determined by God—42 months, or 3.5 years. (cf **Rev. 12:14** and **Daniel 12:6-7**) This timeframe references the last half of the 7-year tribulation period.

***Daniel 12:6-7** And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished*

Rev. 13:7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

The beast is allowed to make war with the saints—and to overcome them. This is also affirmed in **Daniel 7:21**: "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them." To prevail is "to overcome; to gain the victory or superiority; to gain the advantage; to have the upper hand, or the mastery; to succeed." Who are the saints? Those who are holy, religious, consecrated, morally blameless—those who put their faith in Jesus.

At first my mind jumped to spiritual warfare, but the more I think about it, I think this is just talking about physical confrontation and victory. The verse goes on to say that the beast has power/authority/control over ALL kindreds (races, clans), tongues (languages), and nations (foreign, non-Jewish races, Gentiles). This seems to be directly related to physical control. Again, that is not an unbelievable thing considering the technology available in this day and age.

Rev. 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Everyone on earth will worship the beast except one group—those whose names are written in the book of life of the Lamb. Emphasis is given to the fact that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world.

This is another amazing affirmation that God's total plan of redemption was in place before the world was ever created. Because our mind is so limited in understanding compared to God's, man has a hard time accepting this truth. I have heard so many debates and read so many articles related to this subject. The bottom line is that we either accept God at His word or we don't. His word states that He knew all before He created. His word states that He chose to give man the freedom to make choices. His word states that He is not willing that any should perish. His word states that election is His privilege and is based on His foreknowledge. I, for one, embrace it all. I have no problem accepting that the God of the Bible knew not only everything that would happen on planet earth, but that He knew what would have happened in all possible scenarios. I also believe that He set into motion the scenario that allowed man's choices and His will to work hand-in-hand. Anything less is trying to fit God into a sphere of my complete understanding; and if I could do that, He would no longer be the God of the Bible in my opinion.

Considering my conclusion of the truth in the above paragraph, it is not surprising to see reference to a "book of life" that provides a record of all those that would choose to follow the LORD and accept His provision for redemption through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus on the cross. According to my study, I believe that all names are written in the book of life until their opportunity for salvation has been finally rejected—at which time their name is blotted out. Both Moses and the psalmist allude to this truth.

Exodus 32:31–32 *"And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written."*

Psalms 69:28 *"Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous."*

The Lord Jesus also mentioned this truth in His letter to the church at Sardis.

Revelation 3:5 *"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."*

Those who choose to worship the beast face eternal damnation because their names are not included in the Lamb's book of life—that Lamb, Jesus the Son of God, whose death and resurrection for our sin was determined before creation. Paul tells us that the Antichrist will declare himself to be "god" just as Jesus declared Himself to be God.

2 Thessalonians 2:3–4 *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who*

opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

The HUGE difference—Satan is a liar with no real authority and Jesus is righteous and true in all He represented Himself to be.

Rev. 13:9 *If any man have an ear, let him hear.*

Rev. 13:10 *He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.*

Now we are reminded of the letters to the churches—“He that hath an ear, let him hear.” It’s a statement that shows that God is not going to force anyone to pay attention. All men have ears; but not all men choose to listen. (Any parent is well aware of that fact.)

Jon Courson made the point that this admonition to “hear” was not followed by the statement “what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” Why? Because the church is in heaven at this point.

John now records a warning for those who are reading this scripture during the tribulation to pay careful attention to what he is about to read. Many saints will suffer captivity and death during this time. They are to be prepared for this and persevere in their faith; in the end, they will emerge as overcomers.

1 John 5:4 *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

Revelation 21:7 *He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.*

I like the way the New Living Translation puts the second half of the verse:

Revelation 13:10b *..... But do not be dismayed, for here is your opportunity to have endurance and faith.*

This thought is comparable to that expressed in 14:12. Another good reference that sheds light on having this patience and endurance is found in 1 Peter.

1Peter 2:19-21 *For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps....*

E. W. Bullinger posits that verse 10 begins with a Hebraism that expresses destiny and makes reference to the following scriptures. It seems to be a sound application to me.

Jeremiah 43:11 *And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt, and deliver such as are for death to death; and such as are for captivity to captivity; and such as are for the sword to the sword.*

Jeremiah 15:1-2 *Then said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth. And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the LORD; Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity.*

Zechariah 11:9 *Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another.*

Rev. 13:11 **And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.**

Now John sees another (different) beast coming up out of the earth. This beast had two horns like a lamb but speaks with the mouth of a dragon. I have never associated horns with lambs. Lambs are associated with sacrifice, and God provided a ram (which has horns) to Abraham as sufficient for the sacrifice. Maybe that is the connection.

Genesis 22:13 *And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his **horns**: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.*

There has been a very distinct difference between the Lamb and the dragon in the revelation being given to John. The bible dictionary indicated that horns are also a symbol of royal dignity and power; another dictionary said strength and power. Both are applicable to the Lamb, Jesus. This would indicate that this beast would carry the type of dignity and power reflected in a man of God in leadership, but would speak with the cunning and deceitfulness of the dragon (Satan). Because of this description, he is often referred to as the false prophet.

Rev. 13:12 **And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.**

This second beast is able to perform miraculous things like the first beast "before" him. The word for "before" indicates "in the face of, in the presence of." This makes a clear distinction in their positions. The first beast operates at will on his own; the second beast is subject to enablement/empowerment in the presence of the first. The second beast carries enough clout to cause those on earth to worship the first beast. Again, we are told that the first beast has had a miraculous recovery from an apparently deadly wound. The fact that he is directing the worship of the people also indicates a position of religious leadership.

Rev. 13:13 **And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,**

The second beast is able to do great wonders/miracles/signs. He is able to publicly call down fire from heaven to earth just like Elijah of old and the two witnesses in chapter 11.

There is a verse in Job that verifies Satan's ability to call down fire from heaven in accordance with God's permission.

Job 1:16 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Though the fire was attributed to God, the fact is that God had given Satan permission to attack Job, and evidently the ability to call down fire from heaven was included in this permission.

I liked Kenneth Wuest's expanded translation at this point: *"And he performs great miracles the purpose of which is to attest the divine source of the words uttered by the one performing the miracle, even to the extent that he causes fire to be descending out of heaven into the earth in the sight of the men."*

Rev. 13:14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

The second beast is able to "deceive" those living on earth because of his miracles. Jesus warned us of Satan's use of his powers of deceit.

Matthew 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Paul warned us as well.

2Thessalonians 2:9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders....

There are also great verses in Deuteronomy that apply.

Deuteronomy 13:1-3 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

"The test of a miracle is its supernaturalness; the test of its source, the end, or interest for which it is wrought. If in support of anything contrary to God and His revealed will

and law, it is no less a miracle; but in that case it is the work of the Devil; for God cannot contradict Himself.” Joseph Seiss

We are again told specifically that the second beast can only do these miracles in the presence of the first beast. The same Greek word, “enopion,” is used for the word “before” in verse 12 and the phrase “in sight of” in this verse. He uses his platform of power to construct an image or statue of some sort in honor of the first beast.

Now we are told that the apparently deadly wound was caused by a sword/knife/dirck. Some scholars make a connection with this to the following verses in Zechariah. If true, the attack on the Antichrist will result in a useless arm and blindness in his right eye.

Zechariah 11:16-17** For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces. Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: **his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.

Rev. 13:15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

The second beast is able to give life to the image of the beast and cause it to speak. The interesting thing here is that the word for life is “pneuma,” which means “current of air, breath, spirit” (not just a robot). The technologies of today, along with advances in the field of transhumanism, seem to be preparing the way for such an “image.” Those that refuse to worship this image will be killed. There is a verse in chapter 20 that indicates that beheading is the likely method of execution.

***Revelation 20:4** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

Rev. 13:16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

Rev. 13:17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Rev. 13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

The second beast will also implement a system of buying and selling that requires one to have a mark in his forehead or right hand that identifies him/her as a follower of the beast in order to make transactions. That mark will be either the name of the beast or the number of his name. Again, with today’s technology that is quite feasible.

The New American Standard translation of the last half of verse 17 seems to be best to me in this instance and is supported by the Greek—*“except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.”*

Until the development of current technology, it seemed impossible to think that such worldwide economic control could be possible. I think it is important to note that neither economic nor social status will be considered with regard to compliance with this dictate. **No one** will be allowed to buy or sell anything without this mark.

The first step in conditioning the public to accept such “marking” was to introduce the technology as part of vital medical treatment and as a means of improving the safety and security of pets and children. In the push to get to a cashless society, it is now being touted as the most effective safeguard against identity theft, money laundering, thwarting terrorist operations, etc. As I continue to watch the news, it appears to me that many will turn to chip implants or skin tattoos just for the convenience they provide. Very few seem to consider the fact that these implants or tattoos also greatly enable the development of a “big brother” surveillance society similar to that pictured in George Orwell’s, 1984. A chip under the skin allows the powers that be to track a person’s movements and access the personal information it stores. I was surprised to find a report by Jay Stanley and Barry Steinhardt of the ACLU from January 2003 warning against the dangers connected with being part of a “Surveillance Society.” A pertinent quote from that report follows.

“If we do not take steps to control and regulate surveillance to bring it into conformity with our values, we will find ourselves being tracked, analyzed, profiled, and flagged in our daily lives to a degree we can scarcely imagine today. We will be forced into an impossible struggle to conform to the letter of every rule, law, and guideline, lest we create ammunition for enemies in the government or elsewhere. Our transgressions will become permanent Scarlet Letters that follow us throughout our lives, visible to all and used by the government, landlords, employers, insurance companies and other powerful parties to increase their leverage over average people. Americans will not be able to engage in political protest or go about their daily lives without the constant awareness that we are – or could be – under surveillance. We will be forced to constantly ask of even the smallest action taken in public, “Will this make me look suspicious? Will this hurt my chances for future employment? Will this reduce my ability to get insurance?” The exercise of free speech will be chilled as Americans become conscious that their every word may be reported to the government by FBI infiltrators, suspicious fellow citizens or an internet service provider.”

It’s interesting to me that John clearly reveals that the mark will consist of “the name of the beast or the number of his name. He even identifies the number as the number of man—666. In spite of this clear declaration from scripture, people will line up to comply with this directive. The LORD has in the past and in the future will continue to verify the truth of scripture through the fulfillment of prophecy. In spite of an abundance of fulfilled prophetic revelations, men continue to fall for the deceit of the enemy and reject the truth of His word. You would think that the widespread availability of the truth of God’s word today in light of biblical prophecy would promote a great revival of faith, repentance and acceptance of that truth. The pride of

Satan and those that follow him in rejection of God as Lord of His Creation seems to trump truth and reason; they would rather believe a lie than submit to the Creator. This too is in fulfillment of scripture.

John 8:44 "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

John 5:43 "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."

2 Thessalonians 2:8-12 "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

The intro phrase to verse 18 is intriguing. After looking at several translations, it seems to be saying—You are going to need wisdom (understanding, learning, cleverness) to figure out what I am going to say next. Count/compute (from the Greek) the number of the beast. It is the number of a man; man's number is 666. Who knows in what direction this takes you. We know that all the letters of the Hebrew alphabet were assigned numbers as they were in the Greek. There are so many ways you could calculate, yet I believe that those who need and are seeking understanding will probably know exactly what this scripture means when the time comes. That is the whole purpose of revelation—revealing information. God intends for us to understand when He is giving us warning.

It is always amazing to me to see how graciously God so carefully reveals future events so as to testify to the truth of His word and to encourage people to repent and turn to Him in faith and salvation. I'll never understand why people choose to ignore such revelation to their own peril, especially when they are made aware of the accuracy of the biblical record according to the historical record. Obviously, these words of warning from John are specifically directed to those who will be living during that terrible time.

A good quote from David Guzik: "Instead of obsessing with fear and interest about the imitation—the Antichrist—how much more appropriate is it for Christians to be interested in the genuine, Jesus Christ."